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Abstract

A 40-item selective bibliography organized under the headings of The Need for Programs, Descriptions of Programs, The Development and Operation of Programs, Reports of Evaluations of Programs, and Information Sources was developed to assist school districts in planning and implementing exemplary programs of work experience for broadening and improving occupational offerings. The review and analysis summarizes the major strengths of cooperative work-study programs as: (1) a favorable cost-benefit ratio, (2) flexibility of scheduling and operation, (3) a broadening of occupational offerings, (4) job-oriented training programs, (5) reduction of unemployment of those completing programs, (6) development of a work reputation in students, (7) improvement in student motivation, and (8) improvement in school-industry cooperation. Some factors limiting program success include: (1) relative improvement of work attitudes and behavior, (2) lack of congruence of jobs with student interests and aptitudes, (3) little employer concern for student educational development, (4) discrimination by employers, and (5) a lack of awareness of the purposes and objectives of the program. Ordering information is provided for each document cited. (Author)

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WORK EXPERIENCE FOR BROADENING OCCUPATIONAL OFFERINGS: A Selected Bibliography for Use in Program Development

by
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PREFACE

The concept of cooperative education and work experience programs in vocational and technical education is not new. However, recent trends in the world of work and in education provide compelling reasons for "sharpening" our concepts and broadening our perspective in the application of this methodology to more occupational training areas and to different levels of preparation.

This bibliography represents a means to assure the utilization of research and development work, in actual operations in school settings. It was developed to assist school districts in planning and implementing exemplary programs of work experience for broadening and improving occupational offerings. Employment experience programs for students are expected to gain in popularity as public schools assume more responsibility in facilitating the transition of students from school to work.

An increasing number of exemplary programs and projects are being designed to create bridges between school and earning a living, promote cooperation between public education and manpower agencies, and broaden occupational aspirations and opportunities for young people. Direct financial support for exemplary programs and projects is furnished by the U.S. Commissioner of Education under Section 142 (c) of Part D of Public Law 90-576. Financial support for cooperative work-study programs is funded through the States under Part G of the Act.

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INTRODUCTION

The increasing concern of schools for the employability of their clientele has sharpened interest in utilizing programs of work experience as a method of making possible a wide variety of occupational offerings.

References to aid schools in exemplary program development were identified through a review of : (1) Research in Education (RIE), (2) Worker Adjustment: Youth in Transition from School to Work, (3) Abstracts of Instructional Materials in Vocational and Technical Education (AIM), and (4) Abstracts of Research and Related Materials in Vocational and Technical Education (ARM). These reference tools along with additional information sources are listed in the last section of the bibliography.

The bibliography is selective and includes documents which are representative of the various types of programs currently in operation, research reporting their effectiveness, and documents containing suggestions for program improvement.

The bibliographic information for reports with ERIC document (ED) numbers is the same as found in Research in Education (RIE). Most of these items are available on microfiche (MF) or hard copy (HC) from the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). Orders must include payment for items totaling less than $5, a handling charge of 50 cents, and sales tax for states with sales tax laws. Send order to EDRS, National Cash Register Company, 4936 Fairmont Avenue, Bethesda, Maryland 20014.

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REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

The Need for Programs

Work-education programs provide some of the most effective employment preparation in vocational education, however programs are severly limited by the lack of staff support and resources. Two-thirds of the schools with work-education programs offer training only in one occupational area. Only 3274 schools in the United States offered work-education programs in 1965-66. The positive aspects of cooperative education include its flexibility of operation and scheduling and a favorable cost-benefit ration. Work experience programs are a "way out" for administrators faced with the necessity of developing vocational education programs in widely varying occupational areas.

Action is needed on immediate and long-range measures for training youth and enhancing their opportunity to obtain jobs. New and stimulating policies for education and training, guidance, and employment opportunities are imperative.

Descriptions of Programs

Work-experience programs provide training which is specific and job-oriented. In addition to cooperative education programs common in vocational education, some other projects include a work experience center where students working one-half days may proceed at their own rate in studying related subject areas, and programs allowing students to work and attend classes on an alternate-week basis.

Findings indicate that on-job training programs might be too specific unless care is exercised to insure students are moved through a sequence of skill development in the employment center. In one program for delinquents, a monetary reward system was used in a project to refurbish slum housing. Much difficulty was experienced with trainees trying to "beat the system." It was discovered that work attitudes are very difficult to develop.

The Development and Operation of Programs

Guidelines for use by instructors and administrators planning and conducting work-experience programs provide suggestions for: (1) developing local policies, (2) using advisory committees, (3) conducting community surveys, (4) selecting training stations, (5) placing students on jobs, (6) developing training plans and agreements, (7) coordinating school and job training, (8) evaluating the program, (9) using the work environment to produce desired educational aims, (10) using youth organizations to increase the effectiveness of instruction, (11) teaching the related class, and (12) identifying tasks required for jobs and the knowledges necessary for performance of the tasks.

Some major weaknesses in coordinating practices are identified as instruction, coordinating, training station development, and student placement commensurate with their abilities and interests.

Students are primarily concerned with program quality, costs, employers, and interference with student activities. Parents are concerned with transportation, employers, adequacy of the on-job learning experiences, and interference with student activities. Employers are concerned with the length of the work period and the selection of students. Employers often prefer students become proficient in a single job rather than rotate them through several positions. It was suggested that the duties and responsibilities of each party be agreed upon prior to initiating a training program.

Reports of Evaluation of Programs

In one program for school alienated youth, 96 per cent of the enrollees were working to the complete satisfaction of their employers. In a Michigan follow-up study of cooperative education trainees, 1 per cent were unemployed, 40 per cent were continuing their education, over 50 per cent were employed in the field for which they were trained, and 27 per cent were still employed in the cooperative firm where they received training. The students were generally above average. Cooperative education in distributive education increased student test scores on sales comprehension over a class taught by the project method but failed to show any increased contribution in economic understanding.

The disadvantaged student lacks faith in the school as a means of solving his problems. He views work as a minimal means of surviving and views the placement function in cooperative education as more important than the related training. Increased education and skill development in minority groups may not overcome discrimination in hiring practices of the industrial community.

Summary

Major strengths of cooperative work-study programs include: (1) a favorable cost-benefit ration, (2) flexibility of scheduling and operation, (3) a broadening of occupational offerings, (4) job-oriented training programs, (5) reduction in unemployment of those completing programs, (6) development of a work reputation in students, (7) improvement in student motivation, and (8) improvement in school-industry cooperation.

Major factors limiting success of programs include: (1) Work experience does not always result in improvement of work attitudes and behavior, (2) Students are not always placed in jobs congruent with their interests and aptitude, (3) Employers are not always concerned with the educational development of students, (4) There have been cases of discrimination in hiring practices of employers, and (5) Students, parents, and employers are not always aware of the purposes and objectives of the program.

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